

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU # 60

Leo P. Corriveau, Superintendent

Daniel J. Ferreira, Special Education Director

Final Copy

January 14, 1998

**Visit Conducted on:
November 18 and 19, 1997**

Team Members:

Harvey Harkness, Chairperson
Jill Baum
Cindy Buswell
Barry Cook
Joseph Denning
Kenneth DeVoid
Ronda Geisler
Debra Grabill
Joy Hutchins
Shelley Lefevre
Ruth Littlefield
Patti Anne McDaniel
Gina Noylan
Joyce Porter

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. Status of Corrective Actions from Previous On-Site
- III. Issues of Significance
- IV. Citations to the New Hampshire Standards for the Education of
Students With Disabilities
(Commendations, Citations, and Suggestions for each school)

Note: It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU # 60

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU # 60 comprised of the following schools: Alstead Primary School, Vilas Middle School, Acworth School, North Charlestown Community School, Charlestown Primary School, Charlestown Middle School, Walpole Primary School, Walpole Elementary School, Fall Mountain Regional High School, and Fall Mountain Early Learning Center. The visiting team met on November 18-19, 1997 in order to review the status of Special Education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the special education director, building principals, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via phone. Throughout the visit the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report, which you are about to read, represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: *Conducted on April 13-14, 1993*

Based on review of the 1993 on-site report, as well as review of the 1997 on-site application materials and visitations to all schools, the team determined that most of the previous citations have been resolved, with only a few outstanding issues that need to be completely addressed. It was the consensus of the on-site team that there has been much improvement in each school since the previous onsite. The introduction of standardized internal procedures has resulted in a high level of compliance with Federal and State requirements.

Upon review of student files, the on-site team found consistent compliance with state regulations. The team consistently found evidence of the participation of regular education teachers as part of the teaming process, resulting in integrated programming for each student. Individual education plans were comprehensive indicating full access to the curriculum and educational opportunities. Parental involvement in each student's education was documented thoroughly for all aspects of the special education process.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: (Con't.)

The team unanimously agreed a number of programs continue to be hampered due to the constraints of inadequate space. Progress has been made in some schools to solve the problem but much work needs to be done in order to bring all schools to a level of satisfactory compliance. Some classrooms and other instructional areas continue to be of insufficient size to accommodate programs, learning activities and to provide a quality learning environment. Therefore, the evidence supports the position that Ed# 1119.06 continues to be out of compliance with requirements.

In conclusion, the team was favorably impressed with the results of the work of the staff and administration in providing effective educational experiences for the students with disabilities in SAU #60 and urges the member districts to continue their efforts to provide adequate space for children's learning.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Two major issues of significance were identified by the team. The first is the provision of adequate space for learning in a number of schools. This citation has been noted since 1990 and although progress has occurred in some schools there is yet much work to be done before all schools have a satisfactory amount of space for learning activities.

The second issue is implementation of the use of a standard set of forms for the special education process in all of the schools. An effort to introduce the New Hampshire Model Forms has been recently decided by the Special Education Director and the team encourages this direction. It was the consensus of the team the vast majority of procedural citations noted in this report were due to the need for standardization of the forms used in the special education process. Staff recognizes the use of technology as a tool for improving the flow of the special education process. The team supports this endeavor and sees the standardization of forms and the use of technology as mutually beneficial.

COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:**SAU WIDE**

Name of Program(s) Visited: All

COMMENDATIONS:

- The SAU #60 Application and Assurances are complete in most instances and represents the investment of much time and effort. The document needs to be reorganized in order to become “user friendly”.
- All staff employed by SAU #60 for the provision of services to students with disabilities are licensed or certified by the State of New Hampshire.
- The Fall Mountain Early Learning Center offers an excellent preschool program for the children of SAU #60. The staff function as a team coordinating and integrating services for each child. The program is a model of effective early education.
- Staff attitudes are positive and student centered. The teachers work well together by supporting the success of each child.
- The leadership of the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education Services is outstanding. He is trusted and respected by staff and parents for his commitment to children and effectiveness as an educational leader.
- The paraprofessional staff are well trained, supportive of teachers and provide important services for many children.
- The communications between the SAU office, staff, parents and the community about students and activities at school occur frequently using a variety of media.

CITATIONS:**Policies and Procedures in Need of Updating:**

<u>Ed# 1107.03 (h)</u>	Students educational history should be added to multi-disciplinary evaluation
<u>Ed# 1107.07(a)(b)</u>	Eligibility criteria
<u>Ed# 1107.07(d,1-2)</u>	Data interpretation documentation was missing.
<u>Ed# 1109.03(b)(4)</u>	Team composition
<u>Ed# 1109.05(a)</u>	Utilization of I.E.P
<u>Ed# 1115.01</u>	LRE policy
<u>Ed# 1115.03</u>	Team membership
<u>Ed# 1115.04(c)</u>	Home based program
<u>Ed# 1115.06</u>	LRE criteria
<u>Ed# 1119.06(b)(d)</u>	Facilities/space
<u>Ed# 1119.11</u>	1 file: Suspension

COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:**SAU WIDE** (Con't.)**SUGGESTIONS**

- The transitioning of students from one setting to another can be improved by using a process based intentionally on an analysis of student needs.
- Wrap around teams need to share responsibilities and financial support for providing services.
- It is essential for instructional teams to have scheduled time built in the school day for co-planning, evaluation of program effectiveness, conducting child studies and other activities critical to the provision of quality instruction.
- The roles of guidance and school psychology need to be clarified and clearly defined. There does not appear to be an accepted definition for these functions throughout the SAU.
- The caseloads of the speech pathologists need to be carefully analyzed in terms of effective services for students. Some concern was expressed regarding the possibility of excessive caseloads.
- The need to increase the number of classroom aides as a strategy for improving instructional services for children was discussed. We suggest that this issue be reviewed and considered by instructional teams and the administration using objective data prior to increasing the number of aides.

EARLY LEARNING CENTER	
------------------------------	--

Program(s) Visited: Pre-School

COMMENDATIONS:

- Great integrated program. Without knowing the specific titles of the adults working with the students, it is very difficult for an observer to know who is the teacher, paraprofessional, OT, adaptive PE teacher, etc. ALL are reinforcing of each other's work.
- Wonderful climate for children to learn.
- Genuine inclusion of disabled students with non-disabled peers occurs. Bringing non-disabled peers into the program has allowed positive interaction to take place.
- One of the student's I.E.P was integrated into his daily schedule. Objectives were written for HIS day (rather than by curricular breakdown). This, once again, supports the commitment to the team approach.
- Flexible scheduling was established for a student who needed MORE than a half-day session.
- Excellent relationship and support from the SAU Special Education Director.
- Good use of resource in utilizing the bus, which transports disabled students to also transport non-disabled peers.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1107.07(c) 3 files: LEA Representative name was listed on evaluation summary but there was no signature.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Length of the school day is currently defined as "abbreviated", it might be helpful to define modified days in terms of actual hours.
- Develop a systematic process for transition to kindergarten. It sounds like there are some good things happening for those kindergarten programs willing to work with the pre-school. However, it appears that this is informal and voluntary. Presenting what is currently happening to the Special Ed. Director may lead to more consistency in the process.
- Perhaps an outsider could meet with representatives from various wrap-around agencies to discuss the roles for the various agencies in a student's program. It sounds like many agencies are currently expecting the school to "do-it-all".
- It seems that "provide transportation" has great latitude when it is being interpreted. Some assistance from the State Department of Education might be helpful in interpreting the parental responsibilities of getting a student to a reasonable bus stop.

CHARLESTOWN PRIMARY

Program(s) Visited: 1) Resource room 2) Learning Center

COMMENDATIONS:

- The adaptive Physical Education program was impressive.
- Classroom environments are student-centered.
- Staff at Charlestown Primary are pleasant, welcoming and professional and are up beat and supportive in their work with children.
- Special Education staff involved with all students in common areas (hallways, cafeteria)
- The classroom teachers have high expectations with aide support.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1125.03 4 files: Lacked evidence of Written Prior Notice to parents.

Ed# 1109.01(h) 4 files: Length of school day was not included in the IEP.

Ed# 1109.04 4 files: Parent notices were not sent prior to 10 days; no waiver found in files.

Ed# 1123.04 4 files: No list of names/positions of individuals who have access to files or record of disclosure.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Provide a list of who can have access to the special education files and a "sign-out" log to maintain access of documentation.
- Attach progress reports to I.E.P.
- Include the date next to member signatures on evaluation summary reports.

VILLAS PRIMARY

Program(s) Visited: 1)Modified. Regular Classroom

COMMENDATIONS:

- The instructional staff at Villas Primary School are caring, hardworking and skilled.
- There is strong collaboration and communication between parents and staff.
- There is excellent communication and staff rapport.
- Good planning and cooperative teamwork among staff is evident.
- Weekly and bi-weekly meetings to update aides on student progress and planning is an excellent use of time.

CITATIONS: None

SUGGESTIONS:

- Staff expressed concerns regarding space needs for adaptive physical education.
- Need for reviewing the use of paraprofessional to provide clerical assistance.

WALPOLE PRIMARY

Program(s) Visited: 1) 2nd Grade Classroom 2) Kindergarten Classroom

COMMENDATIONS:

- Special education staff are well trained, are very supportive of students and work collaboratively with the regular education staff.
- Special education programs have adequate space and ample instructional materials.
- All staff possess a positive feeling about special education programming.
- Files are well organized with essential information easily accessible.

CITATIONS: None

SUGGESTIONS:

- Increase amount of staff development available to staff.
- In-service workshops on ADD-PDD, Project Read, Written Language.

NORTH CHARLESTOWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited: 1) Grade 2 Classroom 2) Grade 3 Classroom

COMMENDATIONS:

- Files contained all essential information and were well organized
- Special education staff are familiar with plans and implements them.
- There is a high level of communication and collaboration between special education and regular education staff.
- Great referral process and child support team.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1123.04 There was no clear indication who was allowed access to student records and the file cabinet could not be locked.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Student records should be kept in a secure environment with clear indication of access.
- The district may want to look at hiring a paraprofessional to assist special education teachers with provision of services in the regular educational setting.

SARAH PORTER SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited:

COMMENDATIONS:

- Teachers appear to deal very effectively with students who may be experiencing difficulty.
- The students and staff at the Sarah Porter School were very upbeat and welcoming.

CITATIONS: None

SUGGESTIONS: None

NORTH WALPOLE

COMMENDATIONS:

- North Walpole school and staff were very enthusiastic and positive.
- There is good teamwork and support in meeting the needs of all students.
- The special education teacher was well organized, well aware of her students' needs/files and had a nice rapport with students and staff.
- Building staff members include S.O.L.V.E. trained teachers.
- New staff have great support and supervision.
- Weekly work, habits, behavior reports and newsletter are sent home by Mr. Parker, behavioral plans are attached to these.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1109.01 3 files: Length of school day was not included on IEP.

Ed# 1107.05(k) 1 file: Evaluation report not completed within 45 days, no extension filed.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Attach progress reports to I.E.P.
- Include the date next to member signatures on evaluation summary reports.

WALPOLE ELEMENTARY

Program(s) Visited: 1) Learning Center 2) Skill Center

COMMENDATIONS:

- The Walpole Elementary School is very student-centered.
- The staff seems to be very supportive of each other.
- Aides are well trained, integral to student services and work with all students.
- There is a clear understanding of the philosophy of inclusion with appropriate special services as need.
- Classroom teachers see themselves as responsible for all students; the special ed. teachers are involved with all students
- Of special note: all the 6th and 7th grade students were attending a special program at Camp Sargent.
- There is a very strong transition program to high school and high school credit is available to 8th graders involved in agriculture program.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1109.1(h) 2 files: did not indicate length of school day.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Space is a concern at this school; one learning center teacher is using free space across the hall; this availability will change at the end of the term.

CHARLESTOWN MIDDLE

Program(s) Visited: 1} Resource Room 2} Modified Regular Classroom

COMMENDATIONS:

- Charlestown Middle School has a supportive, energetic and child based staff who work well with each other.
- There is good contact between parents and educators.
- The principal offers and encourages staff development opportunities for all staff.
- The TAP program is great!
- Paraprofessionals feel they are part of the team and their ideas and input are valued.
- The LAP program is open to all students
- Excellent opportunities/volunteerism for students to participate in non-academic activities.

CITATIONS:

None

SUGGESTIONS:

- Review school counselor rol regarding I.E.P service delivery and role of psychologists. Educate teachers
- / administrators on counselors role.
- Special Education teachers have a tremendous load. The SAU may want to brainstorm ways to relieve special education teachers of 504 duties.
- On teacher release days, the SAU may want to offer workshops for paraprofessionals.

VILLAS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited: 1} Resource Room 2} Modified Regular Classroom

COMMENDATIONS:

- Strong, experienced support staff provide excellent services via the inclusion process.
- Regular classroom teachers feel supported by the special education staff.
- Strong commitment to inclusion and a continuum of special education options.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1125.03 2 files: did not contain complete Written Prior Notice as outlined in state standards.
1 file: contained Written Prior Notice, but not as required by this reg.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Review Written Prior Notice procedure for the school. New forms may be needed.
- There was an expression of need for more counseling services, possibly through guidance.
- The speech pathologist has a huge case management load that needs to be reviewed for future staffing needs.
- Vilas School will need to review its handicap access regarding the second floor. (Elevator or other system will need to be installed.)

FALL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Program(s) Visited: 1} Resource Room 2} Modified Regular Classroom 3) Agriculture Program

COMMENDATIONS:

- Special education teachers/case managers appear to be a strong team for the high school.
- Special education staff feel supported by administration and regular classroom staff.
- Special education staff are well qualified, experienced and highly motivated.
- Staff seem very aware of individual student needs and are creative in meeting these needs.
- Inclusion is accepted as a goal and staff are committed to reaching this goal.
- Technology is evident and appears to be put to good use. All Resources are fully and creatively used.
- Attention is given to transitions
- All teachers at the Fall Mountain Regional High School are dedicated and caring.
- The agriculture program appears successful for students who need activity-based learning. The relationship teachers have with their students and the cleanliness of the barns was impressive. This program offers a valuable experience to a significant population of students.

CITATIONS:

Ed# 1109.04 1 file: did not contain evidence of written prior notice.

Ed# 1107.02(b) 1 file: initial referral was in June '88; written notice to parent found in file.

Ed# 1107.02(d) 1 file: no evidence of written notice to parents of disposition of referral.

Ed # 1107.02(b)(d) 2 files: did not contain referral sources or written prior notice to parents. (Both students transferred in from other districts.)

SUGGESTIONS:

- Ensure that all regular education teachers have a copy of student I.E.P.'s.
- A system of on-going special education workshops/courses for regular education teachers may be helpful.
- Various opinions regarding high school graduation and diploma requirements were expressed. A team (maybe on-going) to study the graduation requirements for various disabilities should develop an updated plan.
- There appears to be a large enough population of students about to transition to independent living to justify a larger life-skills program, maybe to include an independent living apartment or other arrangement to teach such life skills.

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU #60

Student File Review

Case Study Document

Reimbursement Claim Form

Case Study Addendum Form

<p style="text-align: center;">ADDENDUM JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</p>

SAU # 60

COMMENDATIONS:

- The records for James O' students and out of district placements were complete in every respect.
- The consulting teacher responsible for these students demonstrates a thorough and comprehensive knowledge about each child's program and unique circumstances.

CITATIONS: None

SUGGESTIONS: None